

## **ARLINGTON PARK & RECREATION COMMISSION MEETING MINTUES**

**Approved**

**February 13, 2024**

The Town of Arlington Park and Recreation Commission came to order in the main meeting room at the Community Center on Tuesday, February 13, 2024, at 7:00pm.

**Commission Members:** Scott Walker, Phil Lasker, Shirley Canniff, Jen Rothenberg, Leslie Mayer and Josh Fenollosa. Recreation Director Joe Connelly was also present. Sarah Carrier was not in attendance.

**Anticipated Speakers:** Mike Hendy, Arlington Classic Car Club

**Preliminary Matter:** Scott Walker, Park & Recreation Commission Chair, took formal attendance and welcomed anticipated speakers and members of the public to the Recreation Commission meeting.

### **Special Event Requests**

**Reservoir Parking Lot – Classic Car Show** - Mr. Hendy submitted a request to reserve the parking lot adjacent to the reservoir on June 2, 2024 (rain date June 9) to host a classic car show. Mr. Hendy was accompanied by two members of the club and provided a brief history of the 422-member group and how the club came to be. He outlined the details of the event:

- 30-40 cars anticipated based on attendance of their Mystic Wine Shoppe show.
- Hiring an ice cream truck and would like to allow one of the current members to set up a donut stand.
- A “marshall” would be designated to assist with parking.
- Prizes will be awarded based on judging.

Ms. Rothenberg – Suggested hiring a police detail because of the high traffic activity on nice, summer Sundays. Police would also be able to monitor on-street parking.

Mr. Connelly – Will work with Mr. Hendy on the police detail.

Ms. Mayer – Asked for more details about the judging categories and prizes. She also noted that the parking lot would likely be full by the afternoon set-up/start time. Ms. Canniff requested that the parking lot be closed for the event as a safety precaution as enthusiasts walked through the cars on display. Mr. Connelly stated that he will block off the parking lot the night before. Ms. Rothenberg also suggested posting signage a week beforehand to advise people that the lot would be closed for the event.

Mr. Walker and Ms. Canniff – Extended their support and are looking forward to attending with their families.

Mr. Fenollosa – Inquired about additional groups attending as it could impact Lowell Street traffic. Mr. Hendy stated that other car clubs had not been invited.

Ms. Rothenberg motioned to approve the permit with additional conditions including a police detail, a safety plan and public notification, seconded by Ms. Canniff. Approved 5-0.

### **Bark for Life and Relay for Life**

Ms. Rothenberg – Suggested permitting one event rather than both. She noted that the events are within 6 weeks of each other and have been moved from the fall to the spring. She also stated that the organization and the individual requesting to host the events have no connection to Arlington. Ms. Rothenberg also pointed out that the Bark for Life request indicates that there would be commercial canine vendors at the event, which is not permitted.

Ms. Canniff – Mentioned that there are several other dog related events hosted in Arlington.

Ms. Mayer – Questioned the grounds for denying one event over another.

Mr. Connelly – Noted that the fall was a better time to host the event because there is still water in the Rez. He will invite the American Cancer Society representative to attend a future meeting to discuss both requests.

No vote was taken on the Bark for Life or Relay for Life special event requests.

**Capital Plan Process Discussion** – The Commission discussed potential ways to get the community more involved in the Capital planning process.

Mr. Connelly – Stated the importance of generating community support through co-sponsorship for projects, encouraging the public to bring project ideas to the Commission and getting more people involved in surveys, public meetings and neighborhood discussions. Mr. Connelly shared that Crosby was chosen because it was deemed to be the most unsafe court in town and in the worst condition. The CPA presentation stirred an immediate reaction from the neighbors.

Ms. Canniff - Noted the increasing and constant push-back from the public on some recent projects. The projects in the Capital Plan are necessary to address safety and accessibility concerns while also creating a more beautiful, versatile park. She shared the positive, rewarding experience the Commission was having with the Parallel Park neighbors who had reached out with their ideas. She added that the Commission still needs to create their own Capital Plan and honor their responsibilities.

Mr. Lasker – Noted the need to come up with a plan to resolve competing interests. He also pointed out that a lot of the push back comes from neighborhoods and individuals that don't attend public meetings. Mr. Fenollosa said that it will be helpful to hear the opponents' point of view so the wants and needs of both sides can be considered. He also stated that putting out feasibility study results and conceptual design plans, that are needed for budgeting purposes, too early could result in more opposition as often times those conceptual plans are mistaken for final plans.

Ms. Mayer – Courts had support from those who participate in court activities. Push-back came from the neighborhood who did not participate in the public meetings. Many stated that they did not know about them. She also noted that projects cannot begin until after July 1 (when CPA funding is approved). Recently projects have been approved in separate phases, design and construction, because more groups are applying and competing for funding. She also stated that competing groups, many of which are new, are getting into the same project cycle as the Park Commission. Ms. Mayer pointed out that ARPA funding is no longer available and state money secured by Sean Garballey is an occasional source of funding but is not something that can be worked into a long range capital plan.

Mr. Walker – Suggested posting a Capital Plan 6 months to a year in advance to invite sponsorship. He feels it makes more sense to reduce the number of projects to increase the likelihood of being awarded funding.

Ms. Rothenberg – Added that it may be time to consider doing one project per year. With the Commission's involvement in other department projects (school playgrounds) and multiple PRC projects, there is a lot of extra work for the department. She also suggested the need to educate the public more about the Capital process.

Mr. Connelly – Will share the multi-year Capital Plan with the Commission for review and further discussion about timelines, public notification and gathering support and input. Ms. Rothenberg suggested a "Project Page" to share potential projects with the public. Mr. Lasker shared that the City of

Boston's website includes a list of conceptual design projects, awarded projects and brief bullet-point updates.

Ms. Canniff – Suggested an informal “neighborhood chat” prior to formal public meetings. Mr. Fenollosa noted a previous suggestion to conduct surveys during Town Day events. Ms. Mayer pointed out that Envision Arlington surveys are distributed annually to every household in town along with the census. Survey respondents tend to be the same households each year.

#### **Comments and Items for Future Meetings**

- Park/Playground Permitting

#### **Correspondence Received**

Gabrielle Keller – Request for berm to address disappearing bird habitats.

#### **Approval of Minutes**

- 1/23/2024 – Mr. Lasker motioned to approve the minutes, as written, seconded by Ms. Rothenberg. Approved 4-0 with Ms. Mayer abstaining from the vote.

#### **New Business**

- a. Artificial Turf Committee Update – Mr. Connelly attended the sub-committee meeting today. Experts presented their findings to the committee.

A list of topics with bullet points will be compiled and shared with the public. The document will also include recommendations.

- b. Open Space Committee – Ms. Canniff, no updates.

#### **Public Comment** – N/A

Ms. Canniff motioned to adjourn at 8:30pm, seconded by Ms. Rothenberg. Approved 5-0.

The Arlington Park & Recreation Commission Meeting Minutes were respectfully submitted by Deanna Stacchi.